

SOCIOLOGY 1000  
Introductory Sociology  
Fall 2010 Sections A2, D2

Grande Prairie Regional College  
3 UT Credits

Instructor: Alan Segal

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Office Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays: 16.30 – 17.30 Or By appointment

Course Prerequisite: None

Course Description: An examination of the theory and methods of sociology, through discussions of society, culture, economy, and individual behaviour patterns.

Course Delivery Mode: Discussion, occasional lecture

**Required Texts:**

Sociology For Everyone - Bruce Ravelli, Michelle Webber, and John Patterson  
A Lifetime of Secrets - Frank Warren

**Assignments:**

**NOTE:** All written work must comply with the College's policy on plagiarism. For a detailed explanation of what it is, refer your Grande Prairie Regional College 2010-11 Calendar.

- All submitted work must clearly stipulate your name and course number, and identify which assignment it is. Your assignments will be sent **only** by email. *The receipt date and time that accompanies your email messages will count as the official submission time for the work you're handing in. No attachments are acceptable.* Cut and paste your work and send it as a regular email.
- Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas in sociology, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean reporting what others have said on a topic. Important as this is, other authors' ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific detail that helps you to ask questions about the topic you have selected. My assignments are a philosophical inquiry that is advanced through your and others' investigations. Research is one kind of investigation. What questions are worth raising is an important part of analysis. Conclusions can be valuable but it isn't obligatory

to state any. Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Therefore, while it will not be valued as highly as content, it will be evaluated and therefore can affect your mark.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS EXCEPT THE JOURNALS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE LEVEL PER CALENDAR DAY BEYOND THE DUE DATE. JOURNALS WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE GRADE LEVEL FOR EACH TWO-DAY LATENESS PERIOD. THERE IS ALSO A ONE-GRADE PENALTY FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LENGTH.

Two Journals (F, C to B-)

**Due Date:** First class of November and the last class of December. Anything pertaining to sociology, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal life relevant to our examination of sociology, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is expected. If you do not hand in a journal you will receive a failing grade on that specific assignment. The minimum length is 300 words.

Film Reviews (F, D- to A+):

Throughout the term films will be shown to you. They will be discussed sociologically, employing a variety of ideas mentioned in the main texts. Following the showing of a film, you may be asked to write an essay that sociologically analyzes ideas from the course text. Due dates for these essays will be the first class following the conclusion of the showing of the film. You must display a workable knowledge of the ideas you mention. You gain if you can go beyond what is said in class discussion. Some concepts will be stipulated, which means they must be used in the assignment. These will be added to by at least an equal number that also is mandatory for the discussion, but you will select them. The number of these Reviews will vary but you will submit at least one.

Final Assignment (optional) (F, D- to A+):

**Due Date:** The last class of the semester. Use at least 2 theories and 5 concepts from the main text. Be careful not to confuse concepts and theories. Theories are broad explanations that address substantive areas of human experience. Concepts are ideas that have more limited application or relevance. Analyze sociologically one of the following:

1. A book of fiction, a short story, or a body of work by an author of your choice
2. A television program or series, a movie or collection of films
3. A computer or online game
4. A body of work by a specific creator in any of these areas
5. A song or musical piece, or a body of work by a particular composer.
6. Anything I approve after we have discussed your suggestion.
7. A website with a particular orientation that can be discussed sociologically.

The **minimum length** for this assignment is 1600 words. The purpose is to use ideas from the course to analyze, as you imagine a sociologist would, whatever you write on. No research is required for this assignment. This is an optional assignment to give you an opportunity to possibly improve your final grade. This mark would take the place of one Film Review, assuming the mark was higher than what you originally received.

**Discussion Bonus:**

Everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to a Moodle discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading the books and completing all written assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark. Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 4 daytime or 3 night classes. The bonus effect will not cause more than a 3-level rise in final grades.

**Tabulation of Marks:**

Your final mark will be formulated by adding the total number of points for each letter grade you achieve, and dividing it by the maximum points available for all the assignments for the course. Total points available for this course are a minimum of 8.4.

**NOTE:** (1) No class averaging will be done. (2) All marks will appear on Moodle. You are responsible for monitoring your grade input, and informing me that a mark has not been entered.

**Grade Equivalency:**

A+	95-100%
A	90-94%
A-	87-89%
B+	83-86%
B	80-82%
B-	77-79%
C+	73-76%
C	65-72%
C-	60-64%
D+	55-59%
D	50-54%
D-	45-49%

**NOTE:** On the College's marking grid there is no D-. Therefore no such final mark will be recorded. However, for the assignments that will be evaluated on a full grading grid, I will use D- as a non-failing mark.

## DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

As you consider the questions below for class discussion, keep in mind that quick judgments, or a quick expression of agreement or disagreement, is not what I expect of you.

### Introduction to Course

#### *SFE:* Chapter 1

- What is sociology? What is a sociological imagination?
- Is it possible to live in the world without some aspect of sociological analysis?
- Prepare to explain the types of sociology mentioned.
- What are hegemony, discourse, political economy, status, relations of production?

#### *SFE:* Chapter 2

- Research is pertinent to any systematized discipline of understanding. As you read this chapter, try to understand the assumptions of each branch of sociological investigation.
- What differentiates qualitative and quantitative research?
- What elements of research design are introduced here? Can a study provide reliable but invalid data?

#### *SFE:* Chapters 3 & 4

- What are culture, subculture, counterculture, mass culture, popular culture, material and non-material culture; and cultural capital?
- Why distinguish values, mores, and norms from each other?
- What is ethnocentrism?
- What is socialization? How and why do we socialize people? Why do we use the phrase 'agents of socialization'?
- Have you experienced conflicting types of socialization? Have you experienced re-socialization?
- What have been the more substantial forms of socialization you have experienced? What have been the most significant? Be aware that 'substantial' and 'significant' do not always reference the same occurrence or development.

### *Lifetime of Secrets*

Number all the pages of this book. Then go through it again and identify which of these had a profound impact on you. Be ready to explain why you experienced this effect. Roughly categorize the different postcards. We will discuss your classifications in class. Speculate on what might contribute to the development of secrets and secretive behavior.

SFE: Chapters 5 & 12

- Why might I link chapters on deviance and social change?
- What do sociologists think social change refers to? What social factors play into social change? Are social change and social movements always connected? If not, what characteristics of them clarify the lack of connection?
- What is stigma, and does it apply clearly to deviance and social change?
- Is deviance an individual or a group designation?
- From this point onward in this course, you will have to think of deviance and social dissent simultaneously.**
- How might you comment on deviance if you were 1) a conflict theorist, 2) a functionalist theorist, and 3) a feminist theorist?
- Is a theory another way of mentioning a paradigm? If not, what differentiates these from each other?
- What theories about deviance are presented in this text?
- What is a vested interest?

*Lifetime of Secrets*

Which of the postcards indicate a response to social change? Which of them indicate a form of dissent? What are they dissenting from?

SFE: Chapter 7

- How would you explain the relationship between social structure and social interaction?
- What do sociologists refer to when they discuss status? What are social stratification and social class?
- What indicators can you name that display your social status?
- Have you been convinced that ideas of inequality contribute meaningfully to knowing the world sociologically? What categories of inequality are mentioned in your text? Are some categories left out that you believe should be included?
- What are structural sources of poverty? How do these connect to social mobility? What is social mobility? Do any of these intersect with the idea of meritocracy?
- What ties together development, debt, dependency, and modernization?

SFE Chapters 8 & 9

- Why mention ethnicity and race in the same chapter? How do sociologists explain each of the categories?
- Why do sociologists refer frequently to race, ethnicity, and discrimination as if they are inseparable? What might the existence of discrimination imply for our belief that Canada is a pluralistic society? What is cultural pluralism?
- In what manner can gender be compared to the other characteristics of inequality listed above? Explain the link between feminist analyses and all forms of inequality, but especially

that of gender. Why mention poststructuralist theory when discussing ethnicity, race, sexuality, and gender?

- Why link gender and sexuality to queer theory?
- Does social constructionism cut across all theoretical approaches referred to in these chapters?
- What are hegemonic masculinity, transgenderism, identity, pan-sexuality, racialization? How might the first 4 items fit with our understanding of racialization?
- What does the concept of assimilation encompass? Would we have exploitation if genuine assimilation were achieved? If discrimination didn't exist, could sociologists still speak of exploitation?

### *Lifetime of Secrets*

Prepare to discuss the postcards that you connect to gender and sexuality, ethnicity and race. Do any of the postcards suggest discrimination? If so, what types are suggested?

### *SFE* Chapter 6

- How would you explain 'family' to a being who had no understanding of the concept?
- Do the definitions presented in this chapter cover your ideas of 'family'?
- How easily does your family life fit into the descriptions offered in the text?
- Does the book persuade you that social diversity is accurately and legitimately reflected in the experiences of family in this country?
- What are social institutions and why do we consider the family an integral example of them?

### *Lifetime of Secrets*

Judging from the various cards and prose entries in this book, what could you say sociologically about family in our society? Use specific cards to establish a context for your thoughts.

### *SFE* Chapter 10

- Contemplate the infusion of media into your lives. What prominence does media have in your life? Can you edit it out when you want to?
- Are some elements of media more prominent in your existence, experience, and development, than others? Why do we differentiate between media and mass media?
- Can you imagine social cohesion without media?
- What theoretical perspectives cited in the chapter, most closely reflect what you think about regarding media?

SFE Chapter 11

- We talk about health as if it has singular meaning. Variation, however, is the norm more than the exception. How would you explain Health to someone who is unfamiliar with the concept?
- Think back to our study of culture. What observations do you have about Canadian culture and Canadian discourses about health? If you were asked to contribute sociologically to the development of health policy in Canada, what would you identify the most important considerations or analyses you would bring to that task?
- What is the Sick Role? What is meant by the medicalization of society?
- Before enrolling in this course, had you thought of 'cultures of medicine'?

*Lifetime of Secrets*

Identify the entries that registered with you most profoundly. How do you explain their impact on you? At this very early stage of your exposure to sociology, which of the discipline's ideas would you enlist to analyze the entire book as a single text, rather than individual cards?